

## Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

## Meeting Minutes

**Date of Meeting:** Monday, 24 April, 2006, 10:00a.m. (HST) **Location:** DTS and telephone conference

---

**Subject:** Environmental Justice (EJ) coordination meeting with EPA

---

**Attendees:** Connell Dunning, Debbie Lowe, EPA, Region 9  
Faith Miyamoto, Phyllis Kurio, Ken Banao, DTS  
Lawrence Spurgeon, Nami Ohtomo, Veronica Chan, PB

---

- Summary:**
- The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how to locate where “communities of concern” (minority and low-income populations) exist, determine potential disproportionate and adverse impacts to them, and document consideration of EJ and Title VI concerns. FTA requested that DTS consult with EPA on the EJ analysis methodology. EJ can be a way of helping to comply with Title VI. The overall goal is to try to avoid discriminating against anyone.
  - EPA indicated that they had submitted scoping comments and had received the scoping information package.
  - PB provided background on the project indicating that the project development process would consist of an Alternatives Analysis (AA), followed by a Draft EIS for the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). Currently, the focus is on the AA that would be used as a screening tool for the selection of the LPA. At the end of the AA, the public would be given the opportunity to comment in front of the City Council prior to the City Council selecting the LPA. EPA indicated that if new information arises after the LPA is selected, any of the alternatives that were dropped could be brought back into the analysis.
  - EPA had a question about whether the managed lanes alternative was still being considered. EPA indicated that coordination with FHWA was necessary at this early stage because the alternative incorporates highway facilities. PB agreed, and noted that some FHWA input has been received. FHWA will be a cooperating agency.
  - PB proposed the following evaluation method for the HHCTC project [as described in the Environmental Justice section of the Environmental Methodology Report (handout) and shown in the EJ Analysis Flow Chart (page 2-9)]:
    - 1) Quantitative analysis (“preliminary assessment”) using census data, followed by qualitative analysis (“secondary assessment”) based on other existing sources and local knowledge.
    - 2) Analyze existing minority populations using federally-defined race categories at the block group level to calculate the concentration of each minority category. Because the population of Oahu is comprised mostly of minorities, analysis of this data may not provide meaningful data. Therefore, PB proposes to analyze linguistic isolation, as well. EPA asked why educational attainment is not being analyzed. PB indicated that the results of educational attainment are likely to be captured by the analysis of low-income populations.
    - 3) Analyze existing low-income populations using the Census poverty threshold, which is readily available in census data. PB pointed out that the DOT Order (5610.2) defines low-income as at or below the HHS poverty guidelines and that there is a difference between the HHS poverty guidelines and the Census

poverty threshold. EPA concurred that use of Census poverty threshold is reasonable. EPA also suggested looking at median household income. PB explained that median income would be reported in the context of the larger discussion on socio-economic factors, rather than specifically in the EJ discussion.

- PB indicated that FHWA has suggested that *Environmental Justice in the Planning Process: Defining Environmental Justice Populations* (March 2004) be used for baseline conditions for projects on Oahu. PB will be using the OMPO identified minority and low income EJ areas instead of conducting the calculations for minority and low income areas as proposed in the Environmental Methodology Report. Linguistic isolation will still be calculated as proposed in the methodology. EPA suggested that the analysis should have the same reference; in which case the threshold (one standard deviation for distribution of concentration) for linguistically isolated population concentrations should be determined considering the calculated concentration using all of the census tracts island-wide. EPA would like to review OMPO's report. Other demographic data will also be analyzed in the social impacts section of the report as part of the discussion on community setting.
- EPA had a question regarding the spatial scale of analysis. PB clarified that each discipline will have its own study boundaries. EPA inquired whether existing bus routes would be affected by the project. Existing transit lines affected should be followed up like streams to see if there are any impacts. For example, the fact that a proposed LRT may draw dollars away from an existing bus system or create a smaller bus system should be addressed.
- EPA had specific comments on the draft methodology. EPA requested to be part of the review process for the EJ secondary assessment. EPA also reiterated that once the EIS process starts, if new information becomes available, the project should consider all relevant options (alternatives) back on the table.

**Actions  
Required:**

1. EPA to review OMPO's EJ report (March 2004) and give DTS an assessment of proposed EJ methodology for the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project.
2. DTS to coordinate with EPA for future reviews.

**Distribution**

File: #16434A

By: Veronica Chan, 5/12/06

Meeting Attendees

*The above meeting summary is believed to be accurate to the best of the author's knowledge. Meeting attendees are encouraged to send corrections and addenda to the content of these minutes. If no corrections and/or addenda are received within five days from the circulation date of this report, these minutes will be construed as the official record.*